

Annual Health Report for Brixham, 1895.

Lower Brixham

TO THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF BRIXHAM.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—

I have much pleasure in laying before you my first Annual Report on the Brixham Urban District for 1895.

During the year the number of Deaths reported was 134—57 males and 77 females—giving a mortality of 16·1 per thousand. This rate is influenced by the unusual severity of the weather in February and March, affecting principally the most feeble members of the community—viz., young children and those advanced in life—for out of a total of 37 Deaths recorded for these two months, 11 were under 5 years, and 15 were over 65 years of age.

The number of Births reported was 268—exactly double the number of Deaths—giving a Birth rate of 32·2 per thousand, or a net gain of 16·1 per thousand.

The Infant mortality, or proportion of children dying in the first year, is 97 per thousand, which is remarkably low, being more than 50 per thousand below the average for the whole of England.

There has been a considerable amount of difficulty in estimating the population of the District, on account of the amalgamation of Higher and Lower Brixham; but calculating that the population has increased at the rate of 12 per thousand per annum, it may be taken now as 8,300.

TABLE OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

	(Under 5 Years.)		(Over 5 Years.)	
Small Pox	—
Scarlatina	—
Diphtheria	—
Membranous Croup	...	1	...	—
FEVERS :—Typhus	...	—	...	—
Typhoid	...	—	...	—
Continued	...	—	...	—
Relapsing	...	—	...	—
Puerperal	...	—	...	—
Cholera	...	—	...	—
Erysipelas	...	—	...	—
Measles	...	8	...	—
Whooping Cough	...	—	...	—
Diarrhœa and Dysentery	...	1	...	—
Rheumatic Fever	...	—	...	2
Phthisis	...	—	...	4
Bronchitis	}	...	12	...
Pneumonia				
Pleurisy				
Heart Disease	...	—	...	16
Influenza...	...	—	...	—
Injuries	...	2	...	5
All other Diseases	...	18	...	53
		—		—
	TOTAL	42	TOTAL	92

The Zymotic rate is 1·08 per thousand. This is due chiefly to the Deaths from measles, but it is lower than the rate for Lower Brixham in 1894.

I shall now refer to some of the diseases in the list :—

SCARLATINA :

There are no deaths from this disease. Fourteen cases were reported; these occurred amongst the members of nine different households. This compares very favourably with Lower Brixham last year.

DIPHTHERIA and MEMBRANOUS CROUP :

One case of each notified; one death reported from Membranous Croup. Causes of the diseases uncertain; probably due in the first case to inhalation of sewer gas, and in the latter to drinking from a dirty stream.

TYPHOID :

Two cases notified; one imported, the other produced by insanitary surroundings. Both recovered.

ERYSIPELAS :

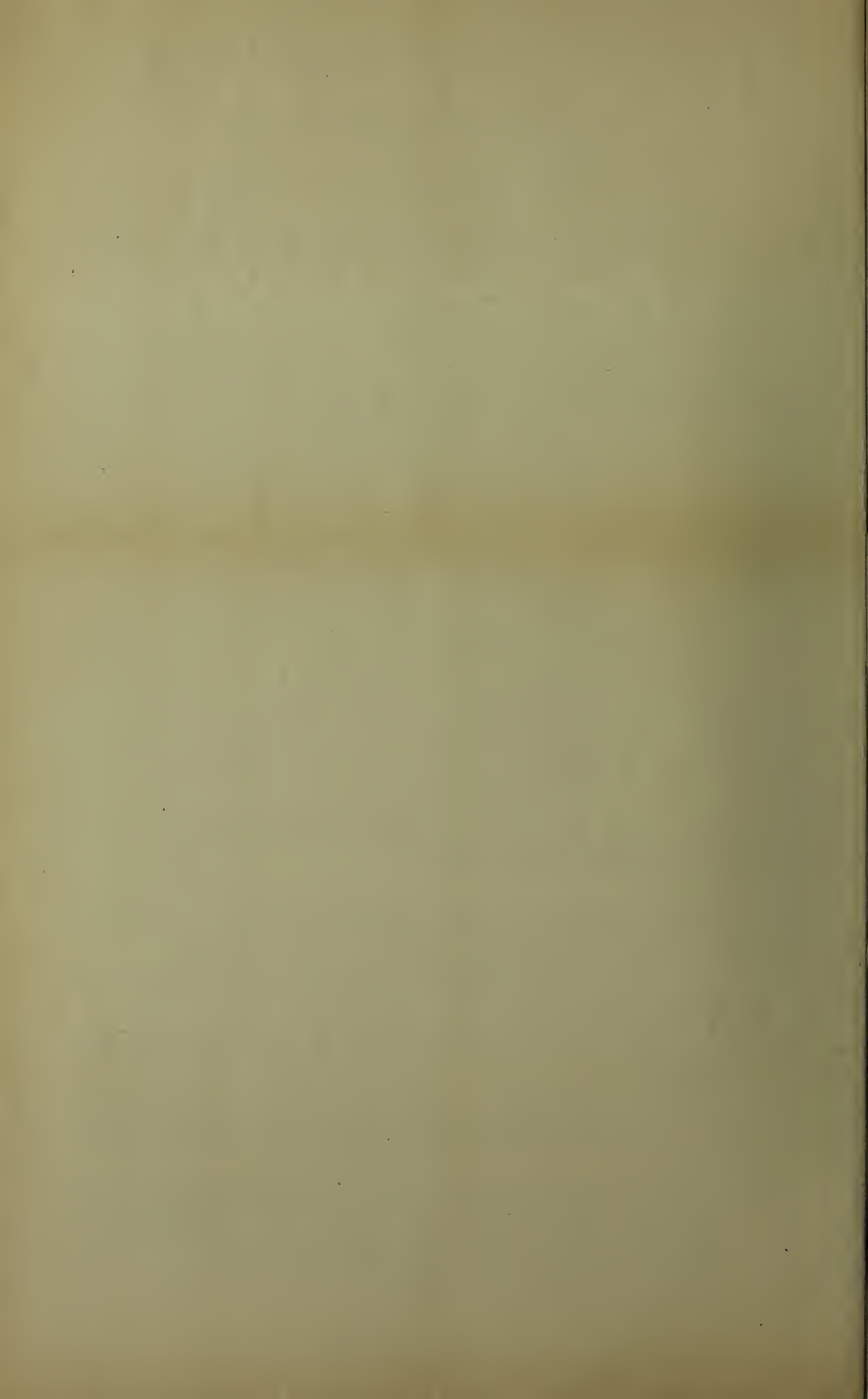
Two mild cases were reported.

In the number of these cases of “notifiable” diseases, there has been a great improvement compared with Lower Brixham in 1894. In 1894 there were in all, 105 notifications sent, but only 20 in 1895.

MEASLES :

A large number of cases occurred in May and June; most of these were amongst children attending the Furzeham Board School, but as the disease was spreading to the others, I closed the Furzeham, St. Peter's Hill, National, and Baker's Hill Schools. The managers of the various Sunday Schools were requested to keep their Schools closed concurrently with the Day Schools, and to put off the usual fetes till the epidemic was over. Some of the managers complied most readily with the request, although put to great inconvenience.

Measles not being a “notifiable” disease, no estimate can be formed of the number of cases that occurred. There were altogether eight deaths.



SANITARY WORK.

The usual inspections of Bakehouses, Slaughter-houses, and Dairies, were made during the year. Several alterations that were necessary were carried out. An order was made closing one Slaughter-house.

Inspections of houses in every part of the town were frequently made, with a view to improving the existing sanitary arrangements, providing closets, preventing overcrowding, &c. There are a great many houses in a most unsatisfactory condition ; some of these are closed now, and others are going to be rebuilt.

During the Spring the Berryhead Road sewer was completed, and the houses for which it was laid have been connected with it. This sewer has not proved to be an unmixed blessing, for the street ventilators, which only acted as outlets, were horribly offensive, had all to be closed, and ventilating shafts are being placed at various points instead.

Two flushing tanks were provided for the sewer : one at the Ranscombe end, the other at the Berryhead end. New sewers have been laid along North Furzeham and Overgang Roads.

Ventilating shafts are being provided for the different sewers, especially in the higher parts of the town.

Last year I recommended that the farmyard in Milton Street should be drained in such a way that there should be no danger of pollution of the water supply at Laywell ; after much trouble in the preliminaries, the work has been undertaken, and is now finished. To avoid further trouble of this kind, it would be most advisable for the Council to obtain possession of the orchard which lies between the farmyard and our water supply.

Two most important questions are at present being dealt with ; namely, the provision of an increased water supply, and the sewerage of Higher Brixham, with extension of the existing out-fall.

From the experience of last summer the fact stands out clearly that the more urgently required of the two undertakings is the increasing of the water supply.

There is no use in disguising the fact that for a considerable time the supply of water was wholly inadequate ; in many instances there was barely enough water for washing and cooking purposes, with the consequence that the sewers were not properly flushed and traps became unsealed.

The greatest inconvenience was experienced in houses in the higher levels, and in some cases they were without water for days at a time.

The gravity of such a state of things is so obvious that every endeavour should be made to prevent its recurrence.

If the sewer from Higher Brixham is laid first, unless there is a perfectly reliable source of water for flushing it, independent of the present supply, the state of affairs with another dry summer would be even worse, for as a matter of fact the various springs and sources of water which could apparently have been safely relied on for feeding the flushing tanks, became dried up.

The importance of possessing a good water supply—one that will suffice not only for the town as it is, but as it will be—may again be alluded to, as so many of the difficulties of keeping houses in a proper sanitary condition are due to the inadequacy of our present supply. Closets with flushing cisterns are at present the exception, and must continue to be so for some time, for there is no use in fitting up cisterns when for a great part of the year there would not be enough water to fill them.

In the summer, sea water might with advantage be used for watering the streets.

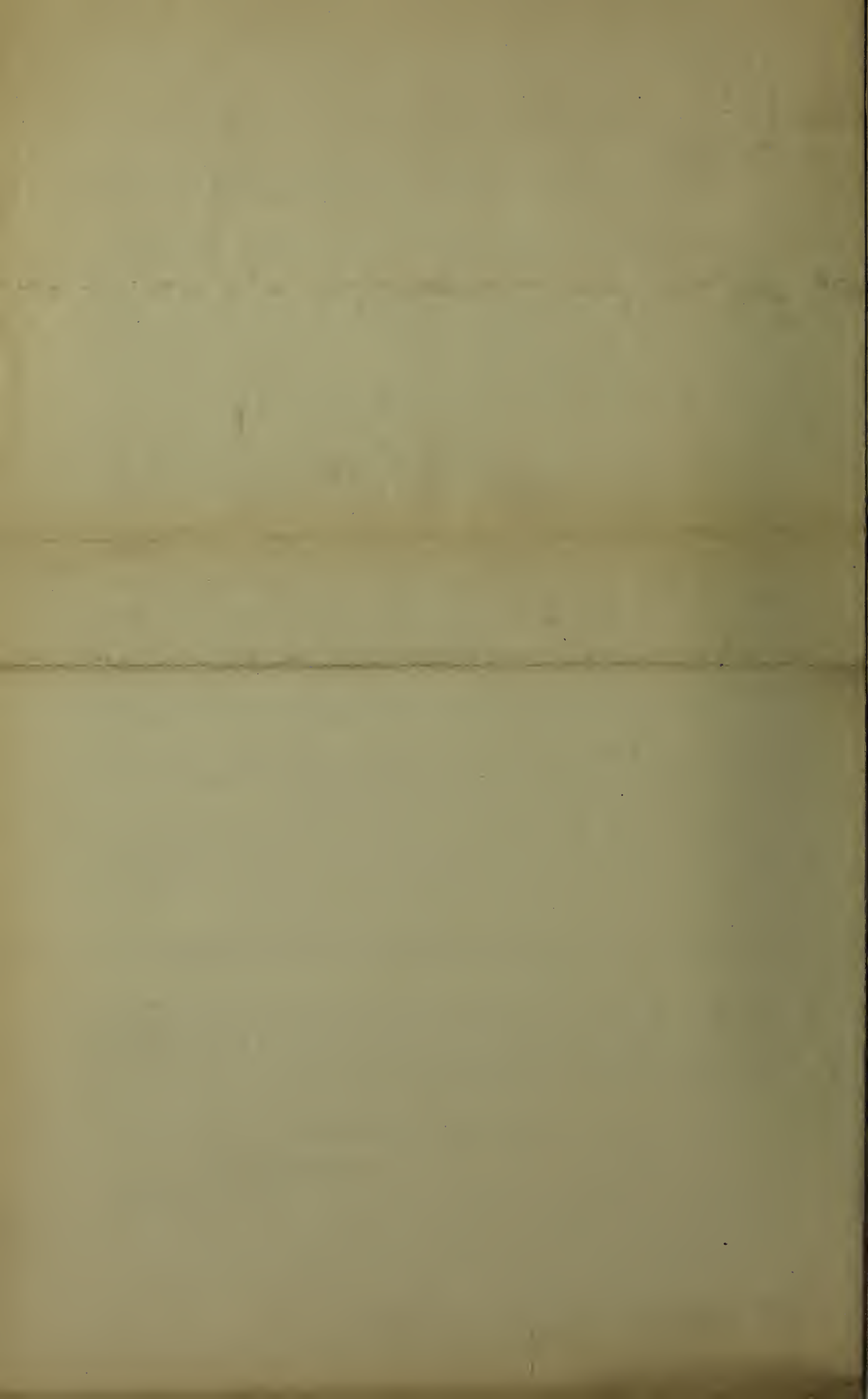
The question of the New Byelaws which is at present under the consideration of the Council, is a most important one ; the present byelaws are thirty years old, and being quite insufficient, the sooner they are amended the better. Much good work could be done in improving the health of the district by the adoption of the Model Byelaws.

There is one suggestion which I would make in reference to dealing with any serious epidemic that may visit us, it is this : that the Council ask the managers of the various Sunday schools in the district to agree to have their schools put on the same footing as those under the Education Board, with regard to closure, and exclusion of scholars coming from infected houses. If this were done it might be of great benefit to the public, for the good that is done in closing a day school or schools is often nullified by the crowding together of children in Sunday schools.

I remain, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

G. BLACKER ELLIOTT,

M. O. H., Brixham.



Copy of Annual Report for 1895

To the Briworth Rural District Council

Gentlemen

For the year ending Dec 31st 1895.

There occurred in the Briworth Rural Sanitary District,
consisting of 36 Parishes, with a total Population of
12,186

323 Births (viz, 139 Males & 184 Females.

and 172 Deaths, of the number of deaths

38 were under 1 year of age

10 " " 5 " "

9 " " 15 " "

5 " " 25 " "

~~4~~ " " 65 " "

66 " " over 65 " "

Total 172

From this number the following were the
registered causes.

3 From Scarlet fever

3 " Influenza

1 " Erysipelas

1 " Measles

4 " Whooping Cough

5 " Diarrhoea

1 " Rheumatic fever.

8 " Phthisis

18 " Bronchitis & Pneumonia

14 " Heart Disease

1 " Injuries

113 " Various other causes

the Deaths from Scarlet fever were
1 at Gillsborough
2 " Briworth over

Deaths from Influenza

Brixworth 1
C. Brampton 1
Maidwell 1

Measles

Walgrave 1

Whooping Cough Boughton 1

East Haddon 1

Holdenby 1

Moulton 1

The following is a list of deaths due to Zymotic Diseases during the year.

Scarlet fever	3
Erysipelas	1
Measles	1
Whooping Cough	4
Diarrhoea	5
	<hr/> 14

I have no means of ascertaining the number of cases of Zymotic Diseases occurring in the district during the year, as the Infectious Diseases Notification Act is not in force.

I should strongly recommend to your Authority the advisability of adopting the act:

I have only made 2 visits & inspections by your order during the year.

1st at Holdenby in March on account of an Typhoid fever case existing there:

2nd at Moulton in August, also on account of Typhoid fever. I reported to your Authority of the

time after my visits in both cases,

2 Samples of water from 2 Wells in the Parish of Moulton were sent for anal. & in both cases the water was found to be polluted to a considerable extent, & entirely unfit for domestic use.

The general death rate of the whole district is still satisfactory.

I am gentlemen

Yours Obedient Servant

A. F. Williams

M. D. H.

Laurel House
Suttrough

5th February 1896

Copy
Annual Report

To
Buckworth B. D. Cowie

1895

A. F. Williams
